

subject, would be an interdisciplinary conference of Torah scholars, practicing Rabbonim, and mental health practitioners. Certainly, the controversy generated by such a conference would be enormous. Be that as it may, the Torah community has waited far too long for

the fruits of such a public controversy. "The competition of scholars will increase wisdom."²⁹

²⁹ *Mesechta (Tractate) Baba Basra 21a*. This is my own free translation of the original text.

Some Aspects of the Selection and Training of Group Workers for After-School Programs in Culturally Disadvantaged Neighborhoods

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This paper deals with some problems arising in the process of selection and training of young adults to become "facilitating agents" in projects designed to foster personality and cognitive development in young children in culturally disadvantaged neighborhoods. Our experience is limited to one such project, now in its third year, in which young people are trained to act as group workers with children whose parents immigrated from Muslim countries (mainly Morocco and Iraq) and received minimal school training. However, we have reason to believe that the problems we faced and studied during our intensive formative evaluation of the training process, would arise also in other cultural settings, whenever the intervention program requires genuine human interaction between a "culturally disadvantaged" child and a "facilitating adult" who had himself been an "advantaged" child.

We define "cultural disadvantage" as the absence (or inadequacy) in the child's home environment of adults who are capable of socializing the child for his present environment, mediating his experiences by socially appropriate interpretations and guiding him in social and intellectual skills which he must master if he is to fulfill the expectations of his teachers. The "disadvantaged" child is commonly identified by nurses in day care centres and, later, by kindergarten teachers and school teachers, by his lack of age-appropriate self-control, low frustration tolerance and poor capacity for delay; poor grasp and lack of interest in mental activity when separated from physical activity, absence of curiosity in general. Programmed efforts at focusing the child's attention on mental tasks tend to result in "escape from thought," either passively, by not paying attention, daydreaming, finger-sucking or masturbating, or by actually running away and hiding. Among older children, acting out in school and truancy are common.

On the assumption that these behavior patterns do not stem from organically determined limitations but are, rather, defensive reactions to the painful, shameful sense of inadequacy due to inadequate socialization and acculturation, a growing number of preventive interven-

tion projects in the United States, England and other countries are designed to provide the child with those missing experiences of human interaction with adults that are considered essential to personality and cognitive development in a highly developed urban, industrial civilization. In brief, these are interactions in which a significant adult:

1. behaves in a reasonably consistent, predictable and intelligible manner;
2. enables and encourages the child to assume age-appropriate independence and self-direction;
3. provides a flow of small increments of new experience, in a stable and well-structured environment;
4. responds with pleasure and interest to the child's exploratory excitement and enters into the child's experience;
5. interprets and explains to the child his experiences, sharing with him (when age-appropriate) his own feelings and ideas.

None of this behavior requires exceptional skills, training or even superior intelligence. In fact this is "natural" behavior observed in parents of normal, healthy and happy children.^{1,2,3} However, not all parents and not all young adults who work in child care and education are able to behave in these

See "Footnotes" on next page.

"natural" ways. This in itself does not pose serious training difficulties, if the trainees are open to learning. The crux of the problem lies in resistance to the process of learning. This paper focuses on resistance to learning and attempts to explore and increase our understanding of it. Our experience has been painful at times but enlightening and included both failures and successes in training. An analysis of the differences between successes and failures helped us to formulate with greater precision the criteria for the selection of staff and to describe both the training interactions that result in learning, and the sequelae of training situations that fail to produce learning.

The Program

Our program, which started in August 1974, is located in a housing development in a suburb of Jerusalem. The parents of the children with whom we are working came to Israel with their families in the 1950's during the large wave of immigration of Jews from Muslim countries; they were then in their teens, though some of the women were already married. They lived for some years in transit camps, in tents, and moved into the present houses about 10 years ago. The apartments are small, with 2 or 3 bedrooms at the most, and the families are large; most families have over 5 children and some as many as 10 or 12.

The project staff consists of 5 young adults; each worker has a group of about 10 children of similar age. The youngest group was started when the children were in kindergarten; they have now entered second grade. The oldest group are in grades 3 to 6. Within the area of the housing development there is a row of

¹ B.L. White, (1971-a) "An analysis of excellent early educational practices: Preliminary report," *Interchange*, 2 (2): 71-88.

² B.L. White, (1971-b) *Human infants: experience and psychological development*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

³ F. Pine and M. Furer, (1963) "Studies of the separation-individuation phase," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 18:325-343.

rooms in an air-raid shelter. Five rooms have been allocated to us; each group has a room of its own. The groups meet with their workers throughout the year three times a week, from 4 to 6 in the afternoon. Activities vary from day to day, but each worker prepares an overall plan for the week; activities include painting and drawing, drama, walks, handwork, carpentry, special trips, story telling and the writing of stories, play and games. The director of the program is in contact with the local school and kindergarten; the children's homes are visited; and several ancillary research projects have been started. Only the workers' interaction with the children will be discussed here.

The Staff: Selection and Training

Success in training the staff is, of course, of central importance in any program. In our program, however, we are concerned also with the speed of the training process. Our aim is to develop a model for afternoon community-based programs in disadvantaged areas in Israel. Because financial resources are very limited, we cannot employ experienced staff and we must be prepared for at least a yearly turnover. Our present procedure is to test candidates during a probationary period of several weeks on the job, helping the worker who is about to leave. The candidate can judge for herself if the style of work suits her; the current worker can assess the candidate; and the director can observe her behavior with the children.

The background of our workers varies: some are recent immigrants, some are sabras born in kibbutzim or in towns. Some come to us straight after completing their army service and some are graduate students in education, psychology or art.

Since ours is an innovative program in its first exploratory phase, training is seen as an integral part of clarifying, evaluating and revising our methods. While certain activities and ways of dealing with the children are suggested, the workers are free to change their plans or approach if they feel that the children

are not responding well. Training is provided by the director during regular weekly meetings with the whole staff. Guidelines are set, clarified and explained. The experience of the past week is assessed and each worker presents his plans for the coming week. The workers' problems in carrying out the guidelines—tension, puzzlement, feelings of anger, and frustration, feeling unable to cope—are worked through in individual sessions with the clinical consultant.

Issues in Training

In the course of both training and supervision, two major issues emerged. Each was related to one of the two basic skills which the workers were required to master: a capacity to establish and maintain *contact* with the children and a capacity to *act as an adult* in their dealings with the children and with the director.

The staff experienced various degrees of difficulty in learning these two skills. In the next two sections we shall describe the normal process of learning, including cases of limited resistance. In the third section we shall describe what happens when the worker is unable to learn the necessary skills yet continues to work with an increasing sense of not doing a good job.

1. BEING IN CONTACT WITH THE CHILD

All child-centered—as against adult-centered or content oriented—programs of education require from the teacher or group worker a capacity for developing and sustaining personal contact with the child. The psychological state of "being in contact"⁴ can be defined as acceptance and awareness of feeling states of *both* interacting persons (the self and the other) so that one (a) expects and perceives the mutuality of the impact each has on the other; (b) signals to the other that it is all right to express feelings and (c) takes pleasure in responding to and sharing feelings.

In programs aiming at intellectual development of culturally disadvantaged children,

yet another form of intimate contact is required: an ability to ignite in the child an interest in the environment and stimulate curiosity by becoming "involved together in the world,"⁵ becoming engrossed together in something beyond the purely personal, arousing in the child a sense of wonder and excitement about ideas.

In both forms of contact, the facilitating adult must *give* of himself in order to get the child to respond. In the first, he must give personal interest in the particular child, his world, his feelings and his thoughts. In the second, he must give, or share, his personal intimate feeling of interest in the world at large. In both instances, the worker must have access to his own feelings and be free to communicate them to the child.

Personal Contact

Awareness of interpersonal process does not necessarily imply immediate understanding of the nature of the feelings that are experienced. Often, one is only aware of tension, discomfort, depression or elation in oneself or in the other, or one notices seemingly inexplicable behavior in oneself or in the other, such as

⁴ In the developmental view of capacity for interpersonal contact, the infant proceeds from a smile, at about 2 to 3 months, to intense eye-to-eye contact soon after, to recognition of the mothering adult's face and stranger anxiety in his 8th month or thereabouts, to increasing capacity to sense the feeling states of significant adults, to imitation, to identification, to feeling guilty for hurting the other, to delight in peer relations, to intimacy, to love. In the mothering adult, complementary capacities for connecting with the child begin with smiling initiatives and cooing, pleasurable eye contact, pleasurable response to the growing infant's social initiatives; when the baby begins to walk, capacity to sustaining contact extends to an acceptance of his separateness and individuality, pleasure in sharing feelings and excitement, ability to place oneself in a child's position and understand his needs. This capsule view of capacity for sustaining contact is elaborated in Rosenfeld, 1973.

⁵ Citations are given from a brief but very interesting paper by Hawkins, 1967.

escape-motions, restlessness, inappropriate or excessive hostility, attention-seeking, etc.

All these elements—awareness of tension, openness to expression of feelings, the attempt at understanding one's feelings and the feelings of others—require a certain minimal amount of tolerance of anxiety. Few adults are free of some residues of infantile (repressed) conflicts and the behavior of children is likely to re-awaken these conflicts and arouse anxiety. In content-oriented programs this danger is minimized but in child-centered programs it is ever-present, both in the worker's interactions with the children and in the course of training and supervision.

Specifically, in order to be able to learn how to establish and maintain contact with a child, the worker must be able to:

1. perceive and report the lack of contact (inappropriate distance) or tension between himself and the children, as an interactional, interpersonal event;
2. respond to the supervisor's request that he recall similar or relevant personal experiences;
3. grasp the connection between his past and present experiences or feeling states, when this is pointed out by the supervisor;
4. carry out the supervisor's suggestions for other ways of dealing with the children and report their response and one's own feelings;
5. appreciate the process of analysis, trial and error, as essential to learning.

In all instances where the workers were able to register and report discomfort, recall similar personal experiences, grasp the connection and modify their behavior towards the children, there was improvement in their relationship with the children. This increased their self-confidence, made them better aware of the meaning of emotional contact and increased their interest and pleasure in working with the children.

Intellectual-Emotional Sharing

Whenever the workers complained that the children were not interested in the plans they

had prepared, the supervisor would ask them to recall a time when *they* had become interested in something and to identify the significant element that ignited their interest. This always proved illuminating and helpful.

It slowly became clear to our workers that in order to stimulate the children's interest, they must share their own interest, their own excitement, with them. They slowly understood why we had no fixed content in our program: the workers had to be free to bring whatever they themselves were interested in. The only thing they could give was something of their own, something that fascinated them, something that had personal meaning to themselves. Once this became clear most of our workers had no difficulty in conveying to the children their own interest and excitement about ideas and thus igniting the children's interest. They used their past experience as a reservoir of anecdotes and associations, they brought books they had enjoyed reading as children, etc.

Occasionally, some of the workers had qualms about imposing their own personal interests upon the children. They had reservations about the possible conflict between "freedom" and "guidance:" they were afraid that too much guidance and direction might destroy spontaneity and creativity. But most of them have had experiences with different types of teachers; the "nice" permissive ones and the "serious" teachers who took their subjects and also the pupil's interest in the subject seriously. Upon reflection, the workers would realize that whatever they had retained from their school learning came, as a rule, from the "serious" and demanding teachers and not the nice permissive ones. This helped to clarify the pseudo-conflict between guidance and spontaneity; it also highlighted the crucial importance of having a deep interest in the subject and sharing this interest with the children.

2. LEARNING HOW TO ACT AS AN ADULT

The requirement that the staff act as adults is essential in our program, for several rea-

sons. For one thing, since the program is experimental, we must engage the staff in being partners with us in evaluating and revising our methods. Secondly, since we aim at developing autonomy and independence, and wish to allow as much freedom of choice as possible, a sensitive application of limits and order is necessary. Finally, we believe that the adult must never pressure the child or intrude into his play; while the group worker needs to guide the children, he must not impose his own ideas, must not control.

The difficulties arise out of the fact that our workers are very young adults, or, more precisely, young people in process of becoming adults. Many of them may not have had the opportunity as yet to act independently and to carry responsibility, especially with a group of children. One would expect that, given a chance to exercise authority and independence as well as responsibility, they would learn quickly how to act as adults. But the wish to be an adult may be undermined by various residues of infantile conflicts with parental or other authority figures. These conflicts and the ensuing defenses may lead the young people to view authority as basically malevolent and threatening; to be reluctant to assume such authority, both because it feels hateful and because they fear that it may evoke hate in the children; and to engage in a struggle of wills with the children. Our success in training the staff to act as adults depends largely on their being relatively free of infantile conflicts with authority figures.

More specifically, the workers can be trained to become active partners in the program only if they perceive authority as basically benevolent. They can be trained to maintain order and structure in a free and relaxed atmosphere only if they feel that the intent is increased autonomy for the child and not the imposition of arbitrary external controls. And they can be trained to let the child be and let him do what he wants only if they feel that they themselves are free to be and do what they want.

Learning to Maintain Structure and Limits

Like most "culturally disadvantaged" children who have difficulties in school performance, our children function largely at a sensori-motor level, are prone to impulsive acting-out, grasp only what is experientially and functionally meaningful at the present moment and make very little use of thought. Much of their behavior is direct tension-discharge: for many months we had great difficulty in getting them to think about what they were doing in carpentry, handwork and even story-telling or drama. Our program, therefore, is directed to habituating the children to think about what they are doing, to establish a distance⁶ between immediate experience and the idea of the experience so that one may talk about ideas. To this end, the workers are instructed to anticipate all planned activities and involve the children in the planning; to talk about what they are doing or experiencing at the moment; to recall past experiences and reflect upon them; and to imagine realistic and unrealistic possibilities. In addition, the workers are specifically directed to avoid purely sensuous experiences that are devoid of thought, since we noted that our children are prone to lose themselves in such experience without its stimulating in them any reflection whatsoever but, often, ending in mindless hysterical screaming and wild outbreaks. Finally, we aim at self-direction and independence of the child. To this end, a clear and stable room arrangement and a fixed placement of all equipment are necessary so that the child may get what he wants without being dependent on the worker's help. All this requires a capacity to establish and maintain

⁶ The concept of "distancing" has been elaborated by I.E. Sigel (1972). Derived from Piaget, the theory posits that in order to develop representational skills i.e., to be able to think about the environment in terms of symbols and signs, certain distancing experiences are needed: distancing in time (past, present, future), distancing in space (here and not here) and distancing in terms of what is real (observable) and apparent (inferred).

order and structure in space and in time. And that calls for a certain degree of inner structure and a set of habits necessary for leading an organized life.

Our main task in training is to shift the worker's definition of the situation and his perception of the role he must play away from "control," "punishment" and "getting rid" of a troublesome child and towards seeing his function as helping the children to develop internal controls. In order to grasp this, the worker must be able to sustain his emotional contact with the child, to make an effort to understand the reasons for the child's behavior, to be aware of his own behavior in relation to the child and to see himself as a benevolent authority figure. New workers often report distress at having to tell a child to leave the room. The staff help each other to understand the need for setting limits and to assume non-hostile ways of discipline.

Learning to Let the Child Be

In general, our workers tend to lean overmuch in the direction of freedom and spontaneity as supreme values and to denigrate the value of order, of planning in advance, anticipating difficulties etc. Yet we discovered that they also tend to react with irrational rage at some perfectly legitimate behavior among the children. On the surface, these were instances where the worker wanted the child to "act his age," to be more "mature"—for example, to draw freely instead of tracing, to put his drawing up on the wall instead of taking it home, to continue with his play instead of shifting to another activity that might have caught his interest, to play cooperative games instead of doing their own thing, etc. The worker's annoyance and frustration led to incidents in which the worker pressured the child and engaged in a struggle of wills. These incidents were brought into supervision and we were surprised by the intensity of feelings they evoked in the workers: "I *don't want* them to act so childish," "I *want* them to learn to work together," "I *want* them to help me make the room pretty" . . . the "I want" was

very strongly felt. When probed, the workers were ready with a self-righteous rationale: it is bad for them to act childish, selfish, etc; it is good for them to act their age. But when asked to recollect similar feelings of annoyance and frustration, they came up with incidents in which their own selfish and childish desire to prove themselves, to show off, to assuage their own insecurity, was predominant. In order to train the worker to let the child proceed at his own pace, it is necessary to make him aware of his unconscious manipulation of the child for his own needs. He must learn to find more age-appropriate, more adult sources of personal gratification and self-esteem.

3. TRAINING FAILURES AND ENSUING DEFENSIVE MANEUVERS

While most of our candidates experienced some difficulties in some areas of required functioning, several of them had serious difficulties; normally, such candidates arrived at the decision to leave during the probationary period and on their own initiative. However, among our initial staff for whom a probationary trial period was not feasible, there were several workers who had great difficulties in establishing contact with the children and in learning how to act as an adult but stayed on the job for about seven months despite an increasing sense of not being able to perform as required and a painful awareness of their work being critically assessed. This situation was allowed to drag on primarily because at the beginning of our experimental program we had no tested standards for staff performance, nor realistic expectations concerning the pace of the children's progress. The developments we shall now describe were unique and did not recur. However, the situation itself is not uncommon, not only in new and experimental programs but also in established institutions, whenever new methods of work are being introduced with existing staff protected by tenure; inevitably, some of the staff are unable to adapt to new requirements, yet choose to remain. The ensuing frustration and strain and the sense of not being appreciated necessitate

some defensive maneuvers which, we have reason to believe⁷ are not very different from the ones displayed by our initial staff. What follows has, therefore, relevance to any educational programs where innovations are being introduced with existing staff.

The process touched off by training failure can be divided into three stages. In the beginning, we were faced with serious *objective difficulties* in carrying out the program: the children were extremely anxious and tense, afraid of all novelty and unresponsive to most suggestions. Most of our plans ended in failure and required constant revision. After about four months, the children relaxed and became responsive to workers' suggestions; at this point the directives given to the staff became realizable. When the workers found themselves unable to carry out specific and tested instructions, it became obvious that their difficulties were *subjective*, involving their personal capacities. At this stage the workers tried very hard to learn how to establish contact and how to act as adults. Their, and our, efforts ended in failure after about three months. The third stage covers the period of about a month, from the time the decision was made to terminate their work and until the time replacements were found and the workers left.

1. *Coping with objective difficulties.* The main emphasis, during the first few months, was on staff involvement in the ongoing assessment of the success or failure of each planned activity period with the children, in order to learn from our experience and revise our methods and plans. The staff met with the director after each work period to discuss the day's events and prepare plans for the next day.

The difficulties in staff meetings resided in the workers' inability to examine their failures as objective facts due, most likely, to inadequate programming. Instead, they experienced each failure in carrying out our plans as a personal failure and the director's probing of the

⁷ Based on personal conversations with model teachers and supervisors helping regular teachers to adopt more child-centered, self-discovery methods.

event as personal criticism. They apparently could not grasp the idea of a trial and error approach, nor did they accept at face value our repeated assurances that one can learn a lot from an analysis of failures. Instead of describing the interaction between their behavior and the children's response, so that we may locate the specific directives that misfired, the workers were mainly concerned about being blamed. At first, they put all the blame on the children: the children won't pay attention, they cannot concentrate, they do not retain anything meaningful, they have no capacity for thinking, they do not pursue any topic, they just react impulsively, etc. To be sure, the children's behavior at that time was difficult. And, to be sure, the tasks we imposed on our inexperienced staff were difficult. But we were prepared for difficulties and failures. However, it was essential for us to probe the failures in order to learn from them. And this became the core difficulty, for the workers feared failure in any form and they had a strong need for praise and approval; thus they perceived the director's probing as a personal attack and experienced the lack of praise as a deep hurt. Staff meetings became increasingly tense, the workers increasingly constricted and resentful of any attempt at analysis and evaluation.

2. *Coping with personal difficulties.* After several months the children relaxed and became open to new ideas, capable of paying attention and holding a discussion in the group. We could now provide clear directives and the director modelled, while the worker observed, ways of presenting an idea to the group and ways of carrying out a plan. Most of our activities were designed at that time to develop secondary cognitive skills of careful observation, recall of details, lucid account of experiences, etc. Staff meetings were discontinued and the director met with each worker individually, planning activities for each day and trying to solve in advance any problems the worker might envisage. While the demand to share in the assessment of the program was dropped, the emphasis was now placed on

evoking the children's interest by sharing with them one's own interest and excitement about the proposed plan of action. A suggestion to go on a walk in order to look at something in particular, had to be made with a tone of voice that suggested excitement and interest. At this precise moment the basic difficulty—inability to express emotion and establish contact—came into the open. The simple truth, "I cannot do it" was expressed in just these words: "I cannot find the words . . . I don't know how to say it." Attempts were made to shift the blame on the children. "When I talk to them, they get bored . . . these children are so different, their life experience is so different . . . I don't know what is important to them . . . they would not be interested in the things that interest me because they do not have my experience . . . I don't believe that what interests me could possibly interest them and this feeling freezes me: the words simply won't come . . ."

The open and explicit admission that they could not perform as required, even though it was clear that others could, marked a clear disidentification with the program, its aim and methods. This process was supported by the group, as the workers, on our suggestion, began to meet on their own to help each other in the preparation of plans for activities. Identification shifted from the program to the children's infantile needs and infantile gratifications. The workers shed all responsibility for carrying out the program. They disagreed with directives but when asked for alternatives, simply said that they do not know, but they disagree with the directive.

3. *Termination.* During the last phase of complete alienation from the program's aims and methods, the workers started talking about "these poor children" and their "needs;" "They need to be free and not feel that we want to teach them things: they have enough of that in school;" "they need to have fun, to be amused, not to be forced to think;" "I feel sorry for them: they need a lot of attention and they need to have fun in life;" "the school and their parents make such demands

upon them: they need love and pleasure." During the last month, when the workers abandoned all efforts at carrying out the program and went on aimless walks in the neighborhood, they felt they were giving something to the children: simple pleasure.

We see here a progressive emergence of a negative social stereotype into full awareness, with an increasing sense of self-righteousness. This process had two obvious defensive functions: it projected the blame for a sense of personal failure on the children and it provided a rationale for giving up effort at fostering the children's intellectual development. The stereotype also provided a rationale for regression: by positing, and then identifying with, the children's presumed "need" for freedom from "the pressure to think," their presumed need for "simple pleasures" and their presumed need to escape from the demands of the school and the home—the workers could both share in the freedoms and pleasures they provided for the children and, at the same time, challenge the aims and methods of the program and see themselves as being "good" mothers.

During that last month the workers also openly indulged in providing the children with surprises. This predilection had been held in check by us so far, although with limited success. We never succeeded in convincing these workers that such surprises and excitements were valueless in terms of our stated aims and that they should, instead, try to share with the children all plans and preparations and to develop anticipatory images of future experiences. The workers preferred to assign to the children the role of passive spectators. They obviously wanted to give pleasure, but this *pleasure-giving had to be fully controlled by themselves*. Furthermore, while they wanted to take initiative in planning surprises, they reacted with resentment and even rage to our questions concerning their aims. "Why must there be an aim?" they wanted to know. "Why must one always think about what one is doing?" Clearly, for this team of workers it was dangerous to merge thinking and feeling,

or thinking and "spontaneous" behavior. They seemed to fear becoming aware of their motives and they could enjoy doing things only if they did not have to think about what they were doing. Thinking had to be disassociated from feeling, had to be isolated, controlled, relegated to a compartment of abstract and academic functions. Feelings must remain unexplored. The possibility that thinking can be fun, that it can be experienced as integral to one's feelings, that the two can enhance each other and illuminate each other without in any way damaging the living experience—was to them incomprehensible, and our demand for them to relate thought and feeling generated rage.

DISCUSSION

We have described some problems in the selection and training of young (untrained) adults to carry out the role of "facilitators" of personality and cognitive development with small groups of young school children generally considered "deprived." We believe that the essence of this deprivation is the absence of "facilitating" interactions with adults both in the home and in the nursery and school environment. The facilitating adult in our program provides a compensatory or supplementary experience. The central problem is the workers' *trainability* for establishing and maintaining emotional contact with the children and for acting as an adult in interactions with the children, the other workers and the administration. Two main criteria of trainability have been described: access to one's own feelings and lack of ambivalence in one's adult identification.

In a sense, the workers' trainability is comparable to suitability for psychotherapy. In both instances the capacity for forming a "working alliance" is necessary: in our case, with the supervisor, in the other case, with the therapist. In the alliance for training purposes, the motivation is to learn necessary professional skills; only incidentally, one learns about oneself. In the working alliance with a psychotherapist, the motivation is to lessen

neurotic suffering. In both instances, access to feelings and a desire to become an autonomous adult are necessary. The practical difference between a psychotherapist and a supervisor in our kind of program is the amount of time available to work through resistances. The psychotherapist's time is, ideally, unlimited. We have very little time to work through resistances.

That resistances to learning exist is a common enough fact. For those engaged in the training of teachers, it may be of interest to examine the *patterning of defenses* we have observed in those of our staff who continued working in our program despite our failure in training.

The first defense was a demand for a traditional content-oriented program and for specific training in transmitting clearly defined content. Such a program *would obviate the necessity of establishing contact* with the child and becoming involved with the child in a process of mutual exploration as well as in joint exploration of the environment. As the requirement for child-centered interactions became more and more feasible, the workers staged situations in which they could *regain control* over the children. One was to exert pressure on the children to "act their age," to show progress, to be mature—legitimizing this as being "good for the children" on general grounds, even though such pressure ran counter to the policy of the program. Another situation which gave the workers a sense of total control was the preparation of surprises for the children; this also served some secondary gains of identification with childish, sensuous pleasures liberated from the necessity to think. Throughout the period of work, but especially in the last stage, the workers attempted to *recover self-esteem* by blaming the children. At the beginning, when the children were indeed unreceptive, simple description of their behavior sufficed to free oneself from any blame for failure. In the second stage, when the children became relaxed and receptive, the issue shifted to a *belief in the children's potential* for normal intellectual devel-

opment. By insisting that "these children" are so different that it is impossible to share one's experience with them; by accepting the children's work, however poorly executed and praising it because one "should not hurt their feelings;" and, finally, by refusing to make any intellectual demands upon them and wishing only to give them pleasure, the workers appeared to accept the negative stereotype of the Afro-Asian Jewish child as intellectually inferior.

Our workers' view of the intellectual potential of the disadvantaged Afro-Asian child must be seen against the backdrop of the views prevailing among kindergarten and school teachers.⁸ Many teachers have a negative stereotyped view of the Afro-Asian population. These teachers tend to feel helpless and hopeless: "those who can, learn; those who can't, don't." Our first group of workers grew up in this country's school system where they were naturally exposed to this negative stereotype of the Afro-Asian child. Although they came to work with us because they wished to help disadvantaged children in their intellectual development, it was to be expected that they would bring with them some residues of the negative stereotype concerning the children's intellectual potential. We expected that the experience of face-to-face contact with a small group of *individuals* in a child-centered program free of concern about teaching specific content, will lead to a dissolution of the stereotype and the emergence of a discriminating view of each child along a wide range of intellectual potential—that in place of "these children" the workers will see "this child." Our experience fully confirmed our expectations: those workers who were capable of establishing contact with the children have simply forgotten that our children are seen by some as different. They are accepting the children's progress as natural and they are concerned about providing special opportunities for the growing number of children they now

⁸ Eva Rosenfeld, (1974) Community Education Project: Progress Report No. 1. Jerusalem: Department of Education. (mimeographed)

see as exceptionally talented and bright. But those workers who were unable to establish contact with the children and kept on working in our program under increasing strain, made use of the negative social stereotype as a defense against loss of self-esteem. This is a familiar phenomenon in school systems where teachers work with minority groups who have difficulties in adapting to unfamiliar demands and expectations.

Access to one's own feelings and the capacity to share feelings with the child appear to be the crucial attribute of any adult who would facilitate the child's personal or cognitive development—whether his role is mothering, care-taking or teaching. The adult's capacity and willingness to connect with the child emotionally is, however, often limited, even in the case of model teachers. Jones⁹ reports teachers' reluctance to use material that stirs strong emotions in pupils and in themselves. Yet, in order to arouse genuine and deep interest, the teacher must bring feelings and thought together. Jones describes and compares pupils' responses to emotionally charged material when the teacher shies away from feelings and when the teacher confronts the feelings: the difference in the level of intellectual response is dramatic.

Beller¹⁰ in his review of research on the role of the teacher in fostering personality and cognitive development in pre-schoolers concludes that closeness to the child and a capacity to "initiate positive cycles in their interaction with the children" are of central importance. Our own experience suggests that the worker's capacity to open up his feelings to the children in turn enables the child to open his feelings with the worker and in the peer group. This unrestricted flow of feelings generates attachments and encourages imitation of the adult and identification with his values and his

⁹ R.M. Jones, (1972) *Fantasy and Feeling in Education*. New York University Press.

¹⁰ E.K. Beller, (1971) "Adult-child interactions in personalized daycare." In Grotberg, Edith (ed.) *Day Care: Resources for Decisions*. Washington: Office of Economic Opportunity, pp. 229-264.

aspirations for the child.

Beyond the questions raised in this paper—how to select and how to train facilitating adults in compensatory after-school programs—lies a more general question: how can we help the many teachers in the present educational systems to become aware of the importance of feeling in education and how can we help those whose resistance to allowing feeling in the educational process is not very strong to make a beginning and discover the rewards that await them.

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